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(i) " The Opening Function Tablet " commemorating the opening function; and

(ii) " The Information Tablet " containing particulars regarding the total cost of the scheme, the date of commencement and completion of the work and the names of the Engineers associated with it.

SRI M. RAJAH IYER : Is the name of the contractor forbidden to be inscribed on the tablet?

THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH : The present position is that only the names of the engineers will be inscribed on it.

Prices of rice and paddy

* 79 *Q*.—SRI M. SUBBIAH CHETTIAR : Will the Hon. the Minister for Food be pleased to state—

(*a*) the basis on which the price for rice and paddy is fixed by the Government;

(*b*) whether the prices so fixed vary from district to distrct; and

(*c*) whether any incidental charges are allowed for transport, milling and other expenses when paddy is converted into **rice?**

THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH : (*a*) The maximum prices fixed by the Government of India for Kattai Samba, a variety of paddy which is mostly consumed in Madras State, is Rs. 39.50 per quintal. Based on this, the prices of other varieties of paddy have been worked out and this Government have notified the maximum prices of paddy and the maximum wholesale and retail prices of the different varieties of rice in each district for 1964–65 season.

(*b*) The attention of the Member is invited to G.O. No. 2858, Food and Agriculture, dated 17th October 1964 in which full details of the maximum wholesale prices of paddy and maximum wholesale and retail prices of rice in each district have been notified.

(*c*) Yes. The following incidental charges are normally allowed for transport, milling and other expenses when paddy is converted into rice :—

Handling charges per quintal—Rs. 0.50.

Milling charge per quintal—Rs. 1.50.

SRI M. SUBBIAH CHETTIAR : Are the Government aware that they have fixed prices for different varieties of paddy and that it has caused confusion to the producer as well as to the buyer and created so many complications? What is the reason for fixing prices for so many varieties?

THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH : Because there are so many varieties available in the State. But these varieties are being categorised into finer, medium, and coarser varieties. Most of the paddy is grouped into these three different categories.

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SRI M. SUBBIAH CHETTIAR: Regarding the conversion charges, the Hon. Minister said that Rs. 1.50 per quintal was being charged for milling. My information is roughly about Rs. 4.20 has been fixed, as the total charge and transport charges from villages to the mills are not included in it. What is the reason for not allowing the transport charges from villages to mills?

THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH: The transport charge from the producer to the assembling point or the mill is covered by the maximum price, and it is delivered at that particular point. It is there the difference comes.

SRI M. SUBBIAH CHETTIAR: Are the Government aware that in many districts including the Tiruchirappalli district the

3-20 p.m. Collectors are insisting that the maximum price should be paid at the village site itself, even in the village itself? Such being the case, why are these transport charges covered by the prices?

THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH: Sir, if there is any specific complaint, and if the hon. Member will communicate it to me, I will look into it.

SRI K. S. ABDUL WAHAB: Sir, are the Government aware that the price of rice supplied in the fair price shops, that is, the Government shops, is higher than the open market price? If so, what action do the Government propose to take to bring down the prices in the Government shops?

THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH: Sir, Government fix a certain price, and rice is available at that price in the Government shops. Government have also recognized the open market, and if the prices there are lower than the prices in the Government shops, it shows that the Government have succeeded in their policy.

SRI M. RAJAH IYER: Are the Government aware that in very small towns and villages, the people are willing to purchase paddy as paddy? Instead of the Government taking the trouble of milling the paddy and then selling it as rice, will they sell it as paddy?

THE HON. SRI M. RAMAIAH: Sir, as things stand at present, we are supplying in the form of rice. Later when we reconsider the position, the suggestion of the hon. Member will be taken into consideration.

SRI M. SUBBIAH CHETTIAR: Government fix pool price for the three varieties. What is the pool price now fixed?

THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH: That information is not with me.

SRI V. K. RAMASWAMY MUDALIAR: Vayakondan, Sirumani, and G.E.B. 24 varieties have been placed on par. That increases the price to the consumer by Rs. 8. May I know the reason for this?

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THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH : I require notice.

SRI M. SUBBIAH CHETTIAR : Sir, the Hon. Minister has said he is not aware of the pool rice. I charge the Government

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : The hon. Member cannot charge the Government with anything during question time. He can only put a question, Sir.

SRI M. SUBBIAH CHETTIAR : Is it a fact, Sir, that the food prices are abnormally high, and the Government are profiteering by charging higher prices for the rice supplied by them?

THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH : If the hon. Member puts a separate question, I will answer how prices are worked out.

SRI G. KRISHNAMOORTHY : Sir, how long will rice be sold in the open market, and when do Government propose to introduce statutory rationing in the State?

THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH : Sir, the suggestion to introduce statutory rationing has come out of the meeting of the Chief Ministers at Delhi yesterday. Till it is fully implemented, open market rice will be available.

DR. H. V. HANDE : The Hon. Minister said that the Government wanted to convert paddy into rice and then supply rice to the consumers. Is the Hon. Minister sure that there are enough number of mills to convert paddy into rice?

THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH : Sir, much more than we can utilize.

SRI M. SUBBIAH CHETTIAR : Is it fair and correct on the part of the Government to include in the price Rs. 3 to Rs. 8 as administrative charges in addition to the Re. 1 already included in the prices as administrative charges? What is object of the Government charging and collecting 20 to 25 nP. per measure more from the consumers?

THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH : I am not able to follow the question, and I think it does not arise out of the main question.

SRI M. SUBBIAH CHETTIAR : Is is not a fact, Sir, that the Government include in the price a sum of Rs. 3 to Rs. 8 per quintal as administration charges in addition to the Re. 1 already permitted? What is the reason for this high administrative charge?

THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH : I did not make mention of any administration charges in the answer to the main question. If the hon. Member has anything in his mind and if he puts a separate question, I will answer.